

American Community Survey (ACS)

Why We Ask: Units in Structure, Rooms, and Bedrooms

We ask questions about the type of building, units in the structure, number of rooms, and number of bedrooms to create statistics about housing types and housing density. These statistics help federal agencies and programs analyze the availability of housing, understand changes in the size and structure of homes, evaluate overcrowding, and plan emergency services.

1 Which best describes this building? <i>Include all apartments, flats, etc., even if vacant.</i>	6 a. How many separate rooms are in this house, apartment, or mobile home? <i>Rooms must be separated by built-in archways or walls that extend out at least 6 inches and go from floor to ceiling.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> A mobile home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INCLUDE bedrooms, kitchens, etc.• EXCLUDE bathrooms, porches, balconies, foyers, halls, or unfinished basements.
<input type="checkbox"/> A one-family house detached from any other house	Number of rooms
<input type="checkbox"/> A one-family house attached to one or more houses	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> A building with 2 apartments	b. How many of these rooms are bedrooms?
<input type="checkbox"/> A building with 3 or 4 apartments	<i>Count as bedrooms those rooms you would list if this house, apartment, or mobile home were for sale or rent. If this is an efficiency/studio apartment, print "0".</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> A building with 5 to 9 apartments	Number of bedrooms
<input type="checkbox"/> A building with 10 to 19 apartments	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> A building with 20 to 49 apartments	
<input type="checkbox"/> A building with 50 or more apartments	
<input type="checkbox"/> Boat, RV, van, etc.	

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census housing questionnaire in 1940, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses

- Required to allocate the annual appropriation for the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG).
- Required to determine demand for senior rental housing, and other analyses of the housing inventory.
- Used to calculate emergency allocations of funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.
- Used in enforcement efforts to eliminate and remedy unlawful discrimination in housing.
- Used to prepare and respond to disasters, by providing communities with information about the demand for public shelters.
- Used to project residential energy demand.
- Used to research and report on the status of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in communities across the U.S.

Examples of Other Uses

State and local agencies use these statistics as part of their comprehensive housing affordability strategies for determining the needs of families residing in the jurisdiction. This information is also used to identify home structures in disaster-prone areas during emergency planning and preparation. Developers and aid groups may use this information to improve areas with overcrowded or substandard housing, while advocacy groups may use this information to educate the public about potential water-related environmental and health hazards.